













Edna St. Vincent Millay's

P O E M S

*Selected for Young People*







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*Selected for Young People*

ILLUSTRATIONS AND DECORATIONS BY

J. Paget-Fredericks



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Edna St. Vincent Millay's Poems

*Selected for Young People*

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# Part One





# From a Very Little Sphinx

## I

COME along in then, little girl!  
Or else stay out!  
But in the open door she stands,  
And bites her lip and twists her hands,  
And stares upon me, trouble-eyed:  
“Mother,” she says, “I can’t decide!  
I can’t decide!”

## II

OH, burdock, and you other dock,  
That have ground coffee for your seeds,  
And lovely long thin daisies, dear—  
She said that you are weeds!  
She said, “Oh, what a fine bouquet!”  
But afterwards I heard her say,  
“She’s always dragging in those weeds.”

## III

EVERYBODY but just me  
Despises burdocks. Mother, she  
Despises ’em the most because  
They stick so to my socks and drawers.  
But father, when he sits on some,  
Can’t speak a decent word for ’em.

I know a hundred ways to die.  
I've often thought I'd try one:  
Lie down beneath a motor truck  
Some day when standing by one.

Or throw myself from off a bridge—  
Except such things must be  
So hard upon the scavengers  
And men that clean the sea.

I know some poison I could drink.  
I've often thought I'd taste it.  
But mother bought it for the sink,  
And drinking it would waste it.



V

Look, Edwin! Do you see that boy  
 Talking to the other boy?  
 No, over there by those two men—  
 Wait, don't look now—now look again.  
 No, not the one in navy-blue;  
 That's the one he's talking to.  
 Sure you see him? Striped pants?  
 Well, *he was born in Paris, France.*

VI

ALL the grown-up people say,  
 "What, those ugly thistles?  
 Mustn't touch them! Keep away!  
 Prickly! Full of bristles!"

Yet they never make me bleed  
 Half so much as roses!  
 Must be purple is a weed,  
 And pink and white is posies.

VII

WONDER where this horseshoe went.  
 Up and down, up and down,  
 Up and past the monument,  
 Maybe into town.

Wait a minute. "Horseshoe,  
How far have you been?"  
*Says it's been to Salem*  
*And halfway to Lynn.*

Wonder who was in the team.  
Wonder what they saw.  
Wonder if they passed a bridge—  
Bridge with a draw.

*Says it went from one bridge*  
*Straight upon another.*  
*Says it took a little girl*  
*Driving with her mother.*

## Afternoon on a Hill

I WILL be the gladdest thing  
Under the sun!  
I will touch a hundred flowers  
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds  
With quiet eyes,  
Watch the wind bow down the grass,  
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show  
Up from the town,  
I will mark which must be mine,  
And then start down!

## City Trees

THE trees along this city street,  
Save for the traffic and the trains,  
Would make a sound as thin and sweet  
As trees in country lanes.

And people standing in their shade  
Out of a shower, undoubtedly  
Would hear such music as is made  
Upon a country tree.

Oh, little leaves that are so dumb  
Against the shrieking city air,  
I watch you when the wind has come,—  
I know what sound is there.



# The Blue-Flag in the Bog

GOD had called us, and we came;  
Our loved Earth to ashes left;  
Heaven was a neighbor's house,  
Open flung to us, bereft.

Gay the lights of Heaven showed,  
And 'twas God who walked ahead;  
Yet I wept along the road,  
Wanting my own house instead.

Wept unseen, unheeded cried,  
"All you things my eyes have kissed,  
Fare you well! We meet no more,  
Lovely, lovely tattered mist!

Weary wings that rise and fall  
All day long above the fire!"—  
Red with heat was every wall,  
Rough with heat was every wire—

"Fare you well, you little winds  
That the flying embers chase!  
Fare you well, you shuddering day,  
With your hands before your face!

And, ah, blackened by strange blight,  
Or to a false sun unfurled,  
Now forevermore goodbye,  
All the gardens in the world!

On the windless hills of Heaven,  
That I have no wish to see,  
White, eternal lilies stand,  
By a lake of ebony.

But the Earth forevermore  
Is a place where nothing grows,—  
Dawn will come, and no bud break;  
Evening, and no blossom close.

Spring will come, and wander slow  
Over an indifferent land,  
Stand beside an empty creek,  
Hold a dead seed in her hand."

God had called us, and we came,  
But the blessed road I trod  
Was a bitter road to me,  
And at heart I questioned God.

"Though in Heaven," I said, "be all  
That the heart would most desire,  
Held Earth naught save souls of sinners  
Worth the saving from a fire?

Withered grass,—the wasted growing!  
Aimless ache of laden boughs!"  
Little things God had forgotten  
Called me, from my burning house.

"Though in Heaven," I said, "be all  
That the eye could ask to see,

All the things I ever knew  
Are this blaze in back of me.

"Though in Heaven," I said, "be all  
That the ear could think to lack,  
All the things I ever knew  
Are this roaring at my back."

It was God who walked ahead,  
Like a shepherd to the fold;  
In his footsteps fared the weak,  
And the weary and the old,

Glad enough of gladness over,  
Ready for the peace to be,—  
But a thing God had forgotten  
Was the growing bones of me.

And I drew a bit apart,  
And I lagged a bit behind,  
And I thought on Peace Eternal,  
Lest He look into my mind:

And I gazed up on the sky,  
And I thought of Heavenly Rest,—  
And I slipped away like water  
Through the fingers of the blest!

All their eyes were fixed on Glory.  
Not a glance brushed over me;  
"Alleluia! Alleluia!"  
Up the road,—and I was free.

And my heart rose like a freshet,  
And it swept me on before,  
Giddy as a whirling stick,  
Till I felt the earth once more.

All the Earth was charred and black,  
Fire had swept from pole to pole;  
And the bottom of the sea  
Was as brittle as a bowl;

And the timbered mountain-top  
Was as naked as a skull,—  
Nothing left, nothing left,  
Of the Earth so beautiful!

“Earth,” I said, “how can I leave you?”  
“You are all I have,” I said;  
“What is left to take my mind up,  
Living always, and you dead?”

“Speak!” I said. “Oh, tell me something!  
Make a sign that I can see!  
For a keepsake! To keep always!  
Quick!—before God misses me!”

And I listened for a voice;—  
But my heart was all I heard;  
Not a screech-owl, not a loon,  
Not a tree-toad said a word.

And I waited for a sign;—  
Coals and cinders, nothing more;

And a little cloud of smoke  
Floating on a valley floor.

And I peered into the smoke  
Till it rotted, like a fog:—  
There, encompassed round by fire,  
Stood a blue-flag in a bog!

Little flames came wading out,  
Straining, straining towards its stem,  
But it was so blue and tall  
That it scorned to think of them!

Red and thirsty were their tongues,  
As the tongues of wolves must be,  
But it was so blue and tall—  
Oh, I laughed, I cried, to see!

All my heart became a tear,  
All my soul became a tower,  
Never loved I anything  
As I loved that tall blue flower!

It was all the little boats  
That had ever sailed the sea,  
It was all the little books  
That had gone to school with me;

On its roots like iron claws  
Rearing up so blue and tall,—  
It was all the gallant Earth  
With its back against a wall!

In a breath, ere I had breathed—  
Oh, I laughed, I cried, to see!—  
I was kneeling at its side,  
And it leaned its head on me!

Crumbling stones and sliding sand  
Is the road to Heaven now;  
Icy at my straining knees  
Drags the awful under-tow;

Soon but stepping-stones of dust  
Will the road to Heaven be,—  
Father, Son and Holy Ghost,  
Reach a hand and rescue me!

“There—there, my blue-flag flower;  
Hush—hush—go to sleep;  
That is only God you hear,  
Counting up His folded sheep!

Lullabye—lullabye—  
That is only God that calls,  
Missing me, seeking me,  
Ere the road to nothing falls!

He will set His mighty feet  
Firmly on the sliding sand;  
Like a little frightened bird  
I will creep into His hand;

I will tell Him all my grief,  
I will tell Him all my sin;

He will give me half His robe  
For a cloak to wrap you in.

Lullabye—lullabye—”  
Rocks the burnt-out planet free!  
Father, Son and Holy Ghost,  
Reach a hand and rescue me!

Ah, the voice of love at last!  
Lo, at last the face of light!  
And the whole of His white robe  
For a cloak against the night!

And upon my heart asleep  
All the things I ever knew!—  
“Holds Heaven not some cranny, Lord,  
For a flower so tall and blue?”

All's well and all's well!  
Gay the lights of Heaven show!  
In some moist and Heavenly place  
We will set it out to grow.

## Journey

AH, COULD I lay me down in this long grass  
And close my eyes, and let the quiet wind  
Blow over me,—I am so tired, so tired  
Of passing pleasant places! All my life,  
Following Care along the dusty road,  
Have I looked back at loveliness and sighed;  
Yet at my hand an unrelenting hand  
Tugged ever, and I passed. All my life long  
Over my shoulder have I looked at peace;  
And now I fain would lie in this long grass  
And close my eyes.

Yet onward!

Cat-birds call

Through the long afternoon, and creeks at dusk  
Are guttural. Whip-poor-wills wake and cry,  
Drawing the twilight close about their throats.  
Only my heart makes answer. Eager vines  
Go up the rocks and wait; flushed apple-trees  
Pause in their dance and break the ring for me;  
Dim, shady wood-roads, redolent of fern  
And bayberry, that through sweet bevvies thread  
Of round-faced roses, pink and petulant,  
Look back and beckon ere they disappear.  
Only my heart, only my heart responds.  
Yet, ah, my path is sweet on either side  
All through the dragging day,—sharp underfoot,  
And hot, and like dead mist the dry dust hangs—  
But far, oh, far as passionate eye can reach,  
And long, ah, long as rapturous eye can cling,  
The world is mine: blue hill, still silver lake,



Broad field, bright flower, and the long white road  
A gateless garden, and an open path:  
My feet to follow, and my heart to hold.



## Eel-Grass

N<sup>O</sup> MATTER what I say,  
All that I really love  
Is the rain that flattens on the bay,  
And the eel-grass in the cove;  
The jingle-shells that lie and bleach  
At the tide-line, and the trace  
Of higher tides along the beach:  
Nothing in this place.



## God's World

O WORLD, I cannot hold thee close enough!  
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!  
Thy mists, that roll and rise!  
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache and sag  
And all but cry with colour! That gaunt crag  
To crush! To lift the lean of that black bluff!  
World, World, I cannot get thee close enough!

Long have I known a glory in it all,  
But never knew I this;  
Here such a passion is  
As stretcheth me apart,—Lord, I do fear  
Thou'st made the world too beautiful this year;  
My soul is all but out of me,—let fall  
No burning leaf; prithee, let no bird call.

## Pastoral

IF IT were only still!—  
With far away the shrill  
Crying of a cock;  
Or the shaken bell  
From a cow's throat  
Moving through the bushes;  
Or the soft shock  
Of wizened apples falling  
From an old tree  
In a forgotten orchard  
Upon the hilly rock!

Oh, grey hill,  
Where the grazing herd  
Licks the purple blossom,  
Crops the spiky weed!  
Oh, stony pasture,  
Where the tall mullein  
Stands up so sturdy  
On its little seed!

# Assault

## I

I HAD forgotten how the frogs must sound  
After a year of silence, else I think  
I should not so have ventured forth alone  
At dusk upon this unfrequented road.

## II

I am waylaid by Beauty. Who will walk  
Between me and the crying of the frogs?  
Oh, savage Beauty, suffer me to pass,  
That am a timid woman, on her way  
From one house to another!

## Low-Tide

THESE wet rocks where the tide has been,  
Barnacled white and weeded brown  
And slimed beneath to a beautiful green,  
These wet rocks where the tide went down  
Will show again when the tide is high,  
Faint and perilous, far from shore,  
No place to dream, but a place to die,—  
The bottom of the sea once more.  
*There was a child that wandered through  
A giant's empty house all day,—  
House full of wonderful things and new,  
But no fit place for a child to play.*

## Song of a Second April

APRIL this year, not otherwise  
Than April of a year ago,  
Is full of whispers, full of sighs,  
Of dazzling mud and dingy snow;  
Hepaticas that pleased you so  
Are here again, and butterflies.

There rings a hammering all day,  
And shingles lie about the doors;  
In orchards near and far away  
The grey wood-pecker taps and bores;  
And men are merry at their chores,  
And children earnest at their play.

The larger streams run still and deep,  
Noisy and swift the small brooks run  
Among the mullein stalks the sheep  
Go up the hillside in the sun,  
Pensively,—only you are gone,  
You that alone I cared to keep.

## Inland

PEOPLE that build their houses inland,  
People that buy a plot of ground  
Shaped like a house, and build a house there,  
Far from the sea-board, far from the sound

Of water sucking the hollow ledges,  
Tons of water striking the shore,—  
What do they long for, as I long for  
One salt smell of the sea once more?

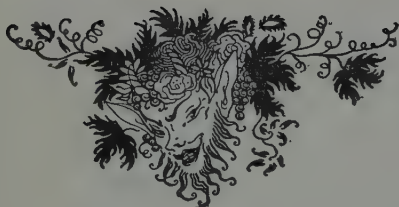
People the waves have not awakened,  
Spanking the boats at the harbour's head,  
What do they long for, as I long for,—  
Starting up in my inland bed,

Beating the narrow walls, and finding  
Neither a window nor a door,  
Screaming to God for death by drowning,—  
One salt taste of the sea once more?



## Doubt No More That Oberon

**D**OUBT no more that Oberon—  
Never doubt that Pan  
Lived, and played a reed, and ran  
After nymphs in a dark forest,  
In the merry, credulous days,—  
Lived, and led a fairy band  
Over the indulgent land!  
Ah, for in this dourest, sorest  
Age man's eye has looked upon,  
Death to fauns and death to fays,  
Still the dog-wood dares to raise—  
Healthy tree, with trunk and root—  
Ivory bowls that bear no fruit,  
And the starlings and the jays—  
Birds that cannot even sing—  
Dare to come again in spring!



## Exiled

SEARCHING my heart for its true sorrow,  
This is the thing I find to be:  
That I am weary of words and people  
Sick of the city, wanting the sea;

Wanting the sticky, salty sweetness  
Of the strong wind and shattered spray;  
Wanting the loud sound and the soft sound  
Of the big surf that breaks all day.

Always before about my dooryard,  
Marking the reach of the winter sea,  
Rooted in sand and dragging drift-wood,  
Straggled the purple wild sweet-pea;

Always I climbed the wave at morning,  
Shook the sand from my shoes at night,  
That now am caught beneath great buildings,  
Stricken with noise, confused with light.

If I could hear the green piles groaning  
Under the windy wooden piers,  
See once again the bobbing barrels,  
And the black sticks that fence the weirs.

If I could see the weedy mussels  
Crusting the wrecked and rotting hulls,  
Hear once again the hungry crying  
Overhead, of the wheeling gulls,

Feel once again the shanty straining  
Under the turning of the tide,  
Fear once again the rising freshet,  
Dread the bell in the fog outside,—

I should be happy,—that was happy  
All day long on the coast of Maine!  
I have a need to hold and handle  
Shells and anchors and ships again!

I should be happy, that am happy  
Never at all since I came here.  
I am too long away from water.  
I have a need of water near.

## Alms

MY HEART is what it was before,  
A house where people come and go;  
But it is winter with your love,  
The sashes are beset with snow.

I light the lamp and lay the cloth,  
I blow the coals to blaze again;  
But it is winter with your love,  
The frost is thick upon the pane.

I know a winter when it comes:  
The leaves are listless on the boughs;  
I watched your love a little while,  
And brought my plants into the house.

I water them and turn them south,  
I snap the dead brown from the stem;  
But it is winter with your love,—  
I only tend and water them.

There was a time I stood and watched  
The small, ill-natured sparrows' fray;  
I loved the beggar that I fed,  
I cared for what he had to say,

I stood and watched him out of sight;  
Today I reach around the door  
And set a bowl upon the step;  
My heart is what it was before,

But it is winter with your love;  
I scatter crumbs upon the sill,  
And close the window,—and the birds  
May take or leave them, as they will.



## Autumn Chant

Now the autumn shudders  
In the rose's root.  
Far and wide the ladders  
Lean among the fruit.

Now the autumn clambers  
Up the trellised frame,  
And the rose remembers  
The dust from which it came.

Brighter than the blossom  
On the rose's bough  
Sits the wizened orange,  
Bitter berry now;

Beauty never slumbers;  
All is in her name;  
But the rose remembers  
The dust from which it came.

## Nuit Blanche

I AM a shepherd of those sheep  
That climb a wall by night,  
One after one, until I sleep,  
Or the black pane goes white  
Because of which I cannot see  
A flock upon a hill,  
But doubts come tittering up to me  
That should by day be still.  
And childish griefs I have outgrown  
Into my eyes are thrust,  
Till my dull tears go dropping down  
Like lead into the dust.



## The Wood Road

IF I were to walk this way  
Hand in hand with Grief,  
I should mark that maple-spray  
Coming into leaf.  
I should note how the old burrs  
Rot upon the ground.  
Yes, though Grief should know me hers  
While the world goes round,  
It could not in truth be said  
This was lost on me:  
A rock-maple showing red,  
Burrs beneath a tree.

## The Spring and the Fall

IN THE spring of the year, in the spring of the year  
I walked the road beside my dear.

The trees were black where the bark was wet.

I see them yet, in the spring of the year.

He broke me a bough of the blossoming peach

That was out of the way and hard to reach.

In the fall of the year, in the fall of the year,

I walked the road beside my dear.

The rooks went up with a raucous trill.

I hear them still, in the fall of the year.

He laughed at all I dared to praise,

And broke my heart, in little ways.

Year be springing or year be falling,

The bark will drip and the birds be calling.

There's much that's fine to see and hear

In the spring of a year, in the fall of a year.

'Tis not love's going hurts my days,

But that it went in little ways.

## Part Two





## First Fig

MY CANDLE burns at both ends;  
It will not last the night;  
But ah, my foes, and oh, my friends—  
It gives a lovely light!

## Second Fig

**S**<sup>AFE</sup> upon the solid rock the ugly houses stand:  
Come and see my shining palace built upon the sand!

## To the Not Impossible Him

How shall I know, unless I go  
To Cairo and Cathay,  
Whether or not this blessed spot  
Is blest in every way?

Now it may be, the flower for me  
Is this beneath my nose;  
How shall I tell, unless I smell  
The Carthaginian rose?

The fabric of my faithful love  
No power shall dim or ravel  
Whilst I stay here,—but oh, my dear,  
If I should ever travel!



## Recuerdo

WE WERE very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.  
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—  
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,  
We lay on the hill-top underneath the moon;  
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;  
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,  
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;  
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,  
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry—  
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.  
We hailed, "Good morrow, mother!" to a shawl-covered  
head,  
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;  
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the apples and the  
pears,  
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.



## The Unexplorer

THERE was a road ran past our house  
Too lovely to explore.

I asked my mother once—she said  
That if you followed where it led  
It brought you to the milk-man's door.  
(That's why I have not traveled more.)

## Grown-Up

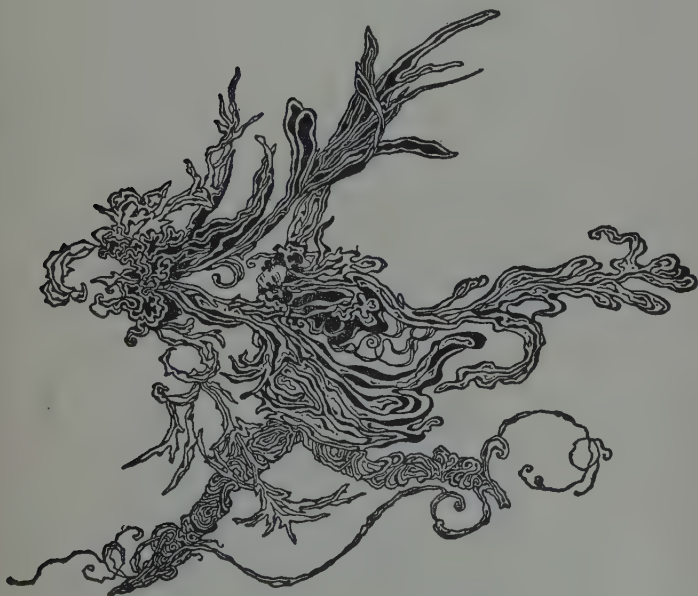
WAS it for this I uttered prayers,  
And sobbed and cursed and kicked the stairs,  
That now, domestic as a plate,  
I should retire at half-past eight?

## Daphne

WHY do you follow me?—  
Any moment I can be  
Nothing but a laurel-tree.

Any moment of the chase  
I can leave you in my place  
A pink bough for your embrace.

Yet if over hill and hollow  
Still it is your will to follow,  
I am off;—to heel, Apollo!



# The Philosopher

AND what are you that, missing you,  
I should be kept awake  
As many nights as there are days  
With weeping for your sake?

And what are you that, missing you,  
As many days as crawl  
I should be listening to the wind  
And looking at the wall?

I know a man that's a braver man  
And twenty men as kind,  
And what are you, that you should be  
The one man in my mind?

Yet women's ways are witless ways,  
As any sage will tell,—  
And what am I, that I should love  
So wisely and so well?

## Travel

THE railroad track is miles away,  
And the day is loud with voices speaking,  
Yet there isn't a train goes by all day  
But I hear its whistle shrieking.

All night there isn't a train goes by,  
Though the night is still for sleep and dreaming,  
But I see its cinders red on the sky,  
And hear its engine steaming.

My heart is warm with the friends I make,  
And better friends I'll not be knowing,  
Yet there isn't a train I wouldn't take,  
No matter where it's going.

## Rosemary

FOR the sake of some things  
That be now no more  
I will strew rushes  
On my chamber-floor,  
I will plant bergamot  
At my kitchen-door.

For the sake of dim things  
That were once so plain  
I will set a barrel  
Out to catch the rain,  
I will hang an iron pot  
On an iron crane.

Many things be dead and gone  
That were brave and gay;  
For the sake of these things  
I will learn to say,  
"An it please you, gentle sirs,"  
"Alack!" and "Well-a-day!"



## Ebb

I KNOW what my heart is like  
Since your love died:  
It is like a hollow ledge  
Holding a little pool  
Left there by the tide,  
A little tepid pool,  
Drying inward from the edge.

## The Little Hill

O<sup>H</sup>, HERE the air is sweet and still,  
And soft's the grass to lie on;  
And far away's the little hill  
They took for Christ to die on.

And there's a hill across the brook,  
And down the brook's another;  
But, oh, the little hill they took,—  
I think I am its mother!

The moon that saw Gethsemane,  
I watch it rise and set;  
It has so many things to see,  
They help it to forget.

But little hills that sit at home  
So many hundred years,  
Remember Greece, remember Rome,  
Remember Mary's tears.

And far away in Palestine,  
Sadder than any other,  
Grieves still the hill that I call mine,—  
I think I am its mother!



## Wild Swans

LOOKED in my heart while the wild swans went over.  
And what did I see I had not seen before?  
Only a question less or a question more;  
Nothing to match the flight of wild birds flying.  
Tiresome heart, forever living and dying,  
House without air, I leave you and lock your door  
Wild swans, come over the town, come over  
The town again, trailing your legs and crying!

## Sorrow

SORROW like a ceaseless rain  
Beats upon my heart.  
People twist and scream in pain,—  
Dawn will find them still again;  
This has neither wax nor wane,  
Neither stop nor start.

People dress and go to town;  
I sit in my chair.  
All my thoughts are slow and brown:  
Standing up or sitting down  
Little matters, or what gown  
Or what shoes I wear.

## Elaine

O H, COME again to Astolat!  
I will not ask you to be kind.  
And you may go when you will go,  
And I will stay behind.

I will not say how dear you are,  
Or ask you if you hold me dear,  
Or trouble you with things for you  
The way I did last year.

So still the orchard, Lancelot,  
So very still the lake shall be,  
You could not guess—though you should guess—  
What is become of me.

So wide shall be the garden-walk,  
The garden-seat so very wide,  
You needs must think—if you should think—  
The lily maid had died.

Save that, a little way away,  
I'd watch you for a little while,  
To see you speak, the way you speak,  
And smile—if you should smile.

CONCORDIA  
ACADEMY  
LIBRARY

## Souvenir

JUST a rainy day or two  
In a windy tower,  
That was all I had of you—  
Saving half an hour

Marred by greeting passing groups  
In a cinder walk,  
Near some naked blackberry hoops  
Dim with purple chalk.

I remember three or four  
Things you said in spite,  
And an ugly coat you wore,  
Plaided black and white.

Just a rainy day or two  
And a bitter word.  
Why do I remember you  
As a singing bird?

## Scrub

**I**F I grow bitterly,  
Like a gnarled and stunted tree,  
Bearing harshly of my youth  
Puckered fruit that sears the mouth;  
If I make of my drawn boughs  
An inhospitable house,  
Out of which I never pry  
Towards the water and the sky,  
Under which I stand and hide  
And hear the day go by outside;  
It is that a wind too strong  
Bent my back when I was young,  
It is that I fear the rain  
Lest it blister me again.



## Departure

It's little I care what path I take,  
And where it leads it's little I care;  
But out of this house, lest my heart break,  
I must go, and off somewhere.

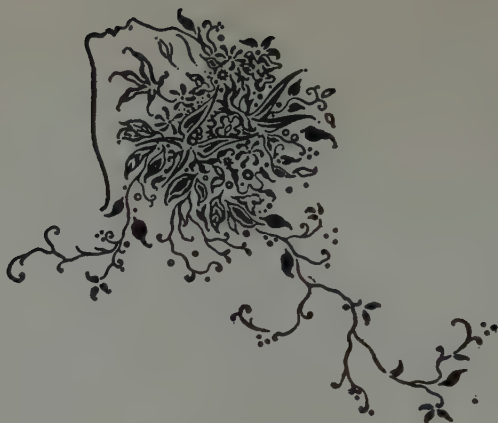
It's little I know what's in my heart,  
What's in my mind it's little I know,  
But there's that in me must up and start,  
And it's little I care where my feet go.

I wish I could walk for a day and a night,  
And find me at dawn in a desolate place  
With never the rut of a road in sight,  
Nor the roof of a house, nor the eyes of a face.

I wish I could walk till my blood should spout  
And drop me, never to stir again,  
On a shore that is wide, for the tide is out,  
And the weedy rocks are bare to the rain.

But dump or dock, where the path I take  
Brings up, it's little enough I care;  
And it's little I'd mind the fuss they'll make,  
Huddled dead in a ditch somewhere.

*"Is something the matter, dear," she said,  
"That you sit at your work so silently?"  
"No, mother, no, 'twas a knot in my thread.  
There goes the kettle, I'll make the tea."*



## The Curse

OH, LAY my ashes on the wind  
That blows across the sea.  
And I shall meet a fisherman  
Out of Capri,

And he will say, seeing me,  
"What a strange thing!  
Like a fish's scale or a  
Butterfly's wing."

Oh, lay my ashes on the wind  
That blows away the fog.  
And I shall meet a farmer boy  
Leaping through the bog,

And he will say, seeing me,  
"What a strange thing!  
Like a peat-ash or a  
Butterfly's wing."



And I shall blow to your house  
And, sucked against the pane,  
See you take your sewing up  
And lay it down again.

And you will say, seeing me.  
"What a strange thing!  
Like a plum petal or a  
Butterfly's wing."

And none at all will know me  
That knew me well before  
But I will settle at the root  
That climbs about your door,

And fishermen and farmers  
May see me and forget,  
But I'll be a bitter berry  
In your brewing yet.

## The Little Ghost

I KNEW her for a little ghost  
That in my garden walked;  
The wall is high—higher than most—  
And the green gate was locked.

And yet I did not think of that  
Till after she was gone—  
I knew her by the broad white hat,  
All ruffled, she had on.

By the dear ruffles round her feet,  
By her small hands that hung  
In their lace mitts, austere and sweet,  
Her gown's white folds among.

I watched to see if she would stay,  
What she would do—and oh!  
She looked as if she liked the way  
I let my garden grow!

She bent above my favourite mint  
With conscious garden grace,  
She smiled and smiled—there was no hint  
Of sadness in her face.

She held her gown on either side  
To let her slippers show,  
And up the walk she went with pride,  
The way great ladies go.

And where the walk is built in new  
And is of ivy bare  
She paused—then opened and passed through  
A gate that once was there.



# Part Three





## Renascence

ALL I could see from where I stood  
Was three long mountains and a wood;  
I turned and looked another way,  
And saw three islands in a bay.  
So with my eyes I traced the line  
Of the horizon, thin and fine,  
Straight around till I was come  
Back to where I'd started from;  
And all I saw from where I stood  
Was three long mountains and a wood.  
Over these things I could not see:  
These were the things that bounded me;  
And I could touch them with my hand,  
Almost, I thought, from where I stand.  
And all at once things seemed so small  
My breath came short, and scarce at all.  
But, sure, the sky is big, I said;  
Miles and miles above my head;  
So here upon my back I'll lie  
And look my fill into the sky.  
And so I looked, and, after all,  
The sky was not so very tall.  
The sky, I said, must somewhere stop,  
And—sure enough!—I see the top!  
The sky, I thought, is not so grand;  
I 'most could touch it with my hand!  
And reaching up my hand to try,  
I screamed to feel it touch the sky.  
I screamed, and—lo!—Infinity  
Came down and settled over me;

Forced back my scream into my chest,  
Bent back my arm upon my breast,  
And, pressing of the Undefined  
The definition on my mind,  
Held up before my eyes a glass  
Through which my shrinking sight did pass  
Until it seemed I must behold  
Immensity made manifold;  
Whispered to me a word whose sound  
Deafened the air for worlds around,  
And brought unmuffled to my ears  
The gossiping of friendly spheres,  
The creaking of the tented sky,  
The ticking of Eternity.  
I saw and heard and knew at last  
The How and Why of all things, past,  
And present, and forevermore.  
The Universe, cleft to the core,  
Lay open to my probing sense  
That, sick'ning, I would fain pluck thence  
But could not,—nay! But needs must suck  
At the great wound, and could not pluck  
My lips away till I had drawn  
All venom out.—Ah, fearful pawn!  
For my omniscience paid I toll  
In infinite remorse of soul.  
All sin was of my sinning, all  
Atoning mine, and mine the gall  
Of all regret. Mine was the weight  
Of every brooded wrong, the hate  
That stood behind each envious thrust,  
Mine every greed, mine every lust.



And all the while for every grief,  
Each suffering, I craved relief  
With individual desire,—  
Craved all in vain! And felt fierce fire  
About a thousand people crawl;  
Perished with each,—then mourned for all!  
A man was starving in Capri;  
He moved his eyes and looked at me;  
I felt his gaze, I heard his moan,  
And knew his hunger as my own.  
I saw at sea a great fog bank  
Between two ships that struck and sank;  
A thousand screams the heavens smote;  
And every scream tore through my throat.  
No hurt I did not feel, no death  
That was not mine; mine each last breath  
That, crying, met an answering cry  
From the compassion that was I.  
All suffering mine, and mine its rod;  
Mine, pity like the pity of God.  
Ah, awful weight! Infinity  
Pressed down upon the finite Me!  
My anguished spirit, like a bird,  
Beating against my lips I heard;  
Yet lay the weight so close about  
There was no room for it without.  
And so beneath the weight lay I  
And suffered death, but could not die.

Long had I lain thus, craving death,  
When quietly the earth beneath  
Gave way, and inch by inch, so great  
At last had grown the crushing weight,

Into the earth I sank till I  
Full six feet under ground did lie,  
And sank no more,—there is no weight  
Can follow here, however great.  
From off my breast I felt it roll,  
And as it went my tortured soul  
Burst forth and fled in such a gust  
That all about me swirled the dust.

Deep in the earth I rested now;  
Cool is its hand upon the brow  
And soft its breast beneath the head  
Of one who is so gladly dead.  
And all at once, and over all  
The pitying rain began to fall;  
I lay and heard each pattering hoof  
Upon my lowly, thatched roof,  
And seemed to love the sound far more  
Than ever I had done before.  
For rain it hath a friendly sound  
To one who's six feet under ground;  
And scarce the friendly voice or face:  
A grave is such a quiet place.

The rain, I said, is kind to come  
And speak to me in my new home.  
I would I were alive again  
To kiss the fingers of the rain,  
To drink into my eyes the shine  
Of every slanting silver line,  
To catch the freshened, fragrant breeze  
From drenched and dripping apple-trees.  
For soon the shower will be done,

And then the broad face of the sun  
Will laugh above the rain-soaked earth  
Until the world with answering mirth  
Shakes joyously, and each round drop  
Rolls, twinkling, from its grass-blade top.  
How can I bear it; buried here,  
While overhead the sky grows clear  
And blue again after the storm?  
O, multi-colored, multiform,  
Belovèd beauty over me,  
That I shall never, never see  
Again! Spring-silver, autumn-gold,  
That I shall never more behold!  
Sleeping your myriad magics through,  
Close-sepulchred away from you!  
O God, I cried, give me new birth,  
And put me back upon the earth!  
Upset each cloud's gigantic gourd  
And let the heavy rain, down-poured  
In one big torrent, set me free,  
Washing my grave away from me!

I ceased; and through the breathless hush  
That answered me, the far-off rush  
Of herald wings came whispering  
Like music down the vibrant string  
Of my ascending prayer, and—crash!  
Before the wild wind's whistling lash  
The startled storm-clouds reared on high  
And plunged in terror down the sky,  
And the big rain in one black wave  
Fell from the sky and struck my grave.  
I know not how such things can be;

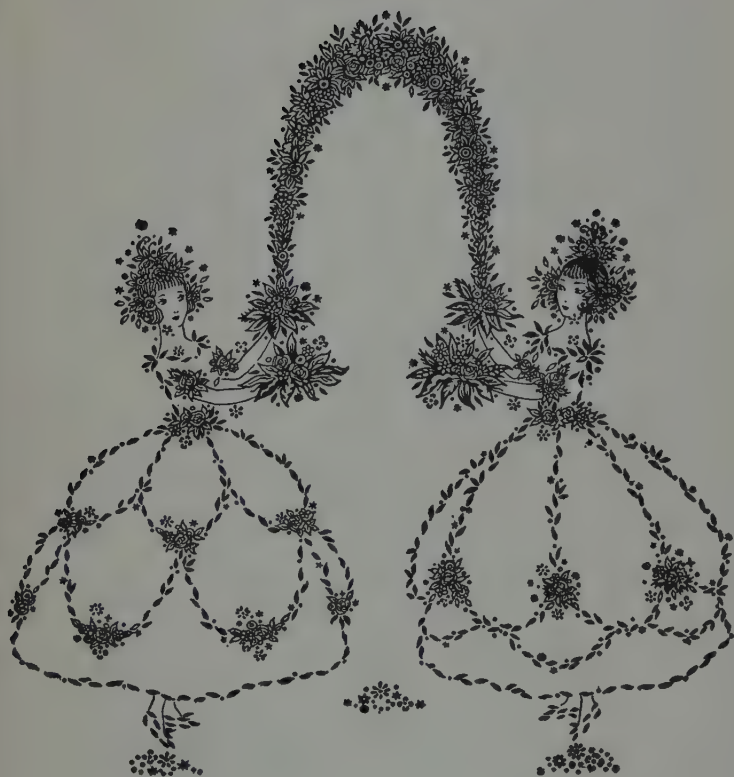
I only know there came to me  
A fragrance such as never clings  
To aught save happy living things;  
A sound as of some joyous elf  
Singing sweet songs to please himself,  
And, through and over everything,  
A sense of glad awakening.  
The grass, a-tiptoe at my ear,  
Whispering to me I could hear;  
I felt the rain's cool finger-tips  
Brushed tenderly across my lips,  
Laid gently on my sealed sight,  
And all at once the heavy night  
Fell from my eyes and I could see,—  
A drenched and dripping apple-tree,  
A last long line of silver rain,  
A sky grown clear and blue again.  
And as I looked a quickening gust  
Of wind blew up to me and thrust  
Into my face a miracle  
Of orchard-breath, and with the smell,—  
I know not how such things can be!—  
I breathed my soul back into me.  
Ah! Up then from the ground sprang I  
And hailed the earth with such a cry  
As is not heard save from a man  
Who has been dead, and lives again.  
About the trees my arms I wound;  
Like one gone mad I hugged the ground;  
I raised my quivering arms on high;  
I laughed and laughed into the sky,  
Till at my throat a strangling sob  
Caught fiercely, and a great heart-throb

Sent instant tears into my eyes;  
O God, I cried, no dark disguise  
Can e'er hereafter hide from me  
Thy radiant identity!  
Thou canst not move across the grass  
But my quick eyes will see Thee pass,  
Nor speak, however silently,  
But my hushed voice will answer Thee.  
I know the path that tells Thy way  
Through the cool eve of every day;  
God, I can push the grass apart  
And lay my finger on Thy heart!

The world stands out on either side  
No wider than the heart is wide;  
Above the world is stretched the sky,—  
No higher than the soul is high.  
The heart can push the sea and land  
Farther away on either hand;  
The soul can split the sky in two,  
And let the face of God shine through.  
But East and West will pinch the heart  
That can not keep them pushed apart;  
And he whose soul is flat—the sky  
Will cave in on him by and by.



# Part Four







## Portrait by a Neighbor

**B**EFORE she has her floor swept  
Or her dishes done,  
Any day you'll find her  
A-sunning in the sun!

It's long after midnight  
Her key's in the lock,  
And you never see her chimney smoke  
Till past ten o'clock!

She digs in her garden  
With a shovel and a spoon,  
She weeds her lazy lettuce  
By the light of the moon.

She walks up the walk  
Like a woman in a dream,  
She forgets she borrowed butter  
And pays you back cream!

Her lawn looks like a meadow,  
And if she mows the place  
She leaves the clover standing  
And the Queen Anne's lace!

## The Bean-Stalk

**H**O, GIANT! This is I!  
I have built me a bean-stalk into your sky!  
La,—but it's lovely, up so high!

This is how I came,—I put  
Here my knee, there my foot,  
Up and up, from shoot to shoot—  
And the blessèd bean-stalk thinning  
Like the mischief all the time,  
Till it took me rocking, spinning,  
In a dizzy, sunny circle,  
Making angles with the root,  
Far and out above the cackle  
Of the city I was born in,  
Till the little dirty city  
In the light so sheer and sunny  
Shone as dazzling bright and pretty  
As the money that you find  
In a dream of finding money—  
What a wind! What a morning!—

Till the tiny, shiny city,  
When I shot a glance below,  
Shaken with a giddy laughter,  
Sick and blissfully afraid,  
Was a dew-drop on a blade,  
And a pair of moments after  
Was the whirling guess I made,—  
And the wind was like a whip  
Cracking past my icy ears,

And my hair stood out behind,  
And my eyes were full of tears,  
Wide-open and cold,  
More tears than they could hold,  
The wind was blowing so,  
And my teeth were in a row,  
Dry and grinning,  
And I felt my foot slip,  
And I scratched the wind and whined,  
And I clutched the stalk and jabbered,  
With my eyes shut blind,—  
What a wind! What a wind!

Your broad sky, Giant,  
Is the shelf of a cupboard;  
I make bean-stalks, I'm  
A builder, like yourself,  
But bean-stalks is my trade,  
I couldn't make a shelf,  
Don't know how they're made,  
Now, a bean-stalk is more pliant—  
La, what a climb!





## Wraith

**T**HIN Rain, whom are you haunting,  
That you haunt my door?"

—Surely it is not I she's wanting;  
Some one living here before—

"Nobody's in the house but me:  
You may come in if you like and see."

Thin as thread, with exquisite fingers,—

Have you seen her, any of you?—

Grey shawl, and leaning on the wind,  
And the garden showing through?

Glimmering eyes,—and silent, mostly,

Sort of a whisper, sort of a purr,

Asking something, asking it over,

If you get a sound from her.—

Ever see her, any of you?—

Strangest thing I've ever known,—

Every night since I moved in,

And I came to be alone.

"Thin Rain, hush with your knocking!  
You may not come in!  
This is I that you hear rocking;  
Nobody's with me, nor has been!"

Curious, how she tried the window,—  
Odd, the way she tries the door,—  
*Wonder just what sort of people  
Could have had this house before . . .*

## Lament

**L**ISTEN, children:  
Your father is dead.  
From his old coats  
I'll make you little jackets;  
I'll make you little trousers  
From his old pants.  
There'll be in his pockets  
Things he used to put there,  
Keys and pennies  
Covered with tobacco;  
Dan shall have the pennies  
To save in his bank;  
Anne shall have the keys  
To make a pretty noise with.  
Life must go on,  
And the dead be forgotten;  
Life must go on,  
Though good men die;  
Anne, eat your breakfast;  
Dan, take your medicine;  
Life must go on;  
I forget just why.



## Tavern

I'LL keep a little tavern  
Below the high hill's crest,  
Wherein all grey-eyed people  
May set them down and rest.

There shall be plates a-plenty,  
And mugs to melt the chill  
Of all the grey-eyed people  
Who happen up the hill.

There sound will sleep the traveller,  
And dream his journey's end,

But I will rouse at midnight  
The falling fire to tend.

Aye, 'tis a curious fancy—  
But all the good I know  
Was taught me out of two grey eyes  
A long time ago.



# When the Year Grows Old

I CANNOT but remember  
When the year grows old—  
October—November—  
How she disliked the cold!

She used to watch the swallows  
Go down across the sky,  
And turn from the window  
With a little sharp sigh.

And often when the brown leaves  
Were brittle on the ground,  
And the wind in the chimney  
Made a melancholy sound,

She had a look about her  
That I wish I could forget—  
The look of a scared thing  
Sitting in a net!

Oh, beautiful at nightfall  
The soft spitting snow!  
And beautiful the bare boughs  
Rubbing to and fro!

But the roaring of the fire,  
And the warmth of fur,  
And the boiling of the kettle  
Were beautiful to her!

I cannot but remember  
When the year grows old—  
October—November—  
How she disliked the cold!

## The Return from Town

As I sat down by Saddle Stream  
To bathe my dusty feet there  
A boy was standing on the bridge  
Any girl would meet there.

As I went over Woody Knob  
And dipped into the hollow,  
A youth was coming up the hill  
Any maid would follow.

Then in I turned at my own gate,—  
And nothing to be sad for—  
To such a man as any wife  
Would pass a pretty lad for.

# The Ballad of the Harp-Weaver

SON," said my mother,  
When I was knee-high,  
"You've need of clothes to cover you,  
And not a rag have I.

"There's nothing in the house  
To make a boy breeches,  
Nor shears to cut a cloth with  
Nor thread to take stitches.

"There's nothing in the house  
But a loaf-end of rye,  
And a harp with a woman's head  
Nobody will buy,"  
And she began to cry.

That was in the early fall.  
When came the late fall,  
"Son," she said, "the sight of you  
Makes your mother's blood crawl,—

"Little skinny shoulder-blades  
Sticking through your clothes!  
And where you'll get a jacket from  
God above knows.

"It's lucky for me, lad,  
Your daddy's in the ground,  
And can't see the way I let  
His son go around!"  
And she made a queer sound.

That was in the late fall.  
When the winter came,  
I'd not a pair of breeches  
Nor a shirt to my name.

I couldn't go to school,  
Or out of doors to play.  
And all the other little boys  
Passed our way.

"Son," said my mother,  
"Come, climb into my lap,  
And I'll chafe your little bones  
While you take a nap."

And, oh, but we were silly  
For half an hour or more,  
Me with my long legs  
Dragging on the floor,

A-rock-rock-rocking  
To a mother-goose rhyme!  
Oh, but we were happy  
For half an hour's time!

But there was I, a great boy,  
And what would folks say  
To hear my mother singing me  
To sleep all day,  
In such a daft way?

Men say the winter  
Was bad that year;

Fuel was scarce,  
And food was dear.

A wind with a wolf's head  
Howled about our door,  
And we burned up the chairs  
And sat upon the floor.

All that was left us  
Was a chair we couldn't break,  
And the harp with a woman's head  
Nobody would take,  
For song or pity's sake.

The night before Christmas  
I cried with the cold,  
I cried myself to sleep  
Like a two-year-old.

And in the deep night  
I felt my mother rise,  
And stare down upon me  
With love in her eyes.

I saw my mother sitting  
On the one good chair,  
A light falling on her  
From I couldn't tell where,

Looking nineteen,  
And not a day older,  
And the harp with a woman's head  
Leaned against her shoulder.

Her thin fingers, moving  
In the thin, tall strings,  
Were weav-weav-weaving  
Wonderful things.

Many bright threads,  
From where I couldn't see,  
Were running through the harp-strings  
Rapidly,

And gold threads whistling  
Through my mother's hand.  
I saw the web grow,  
And the pattern expand.

She wove a child's jacket,  
And when it was done  
She laid it on the floor  
And wove another one.

She wove a red cloak  
So regal to see,  
"She's made it for a king's son,"  
I said, "and not for me."  
But I knew it was for me.

She wove a pair of breeches  
Quicker than that!  
She wove a pair of boots  
And a little cocked hat.

She wove a pair of mittens,  
She wove a little blouse,

She wove all night  
In the still, cold house.

She sang as she worked,  
And the harp-strings spoke;  
Her voice never faltered,  
And the thread never broke.  
And when I awoke,—

There sat my mother  
With the harp against her shoulder,  
Looking nineteen  
And not a day older,

A smile about her lips,  
And a light about her head,  
And her hands in the harp-strings  
Frozen dead.

And piled up beside her  
And toppling to the skies,  
Were the clothes of a king's son,  
Just my size.



## Part Five

Memorial to D.C.

(Vassar College, 1918)

O H, LOVELIEST throat of all sweet throats,  
Where now no more the music is,  
With hands that wrote you little notes  
I write you little elegies!

## Epitaph

**H**<sup>EAP</sup> not on this mound  
Roses that she loved so well;  
Why bewilder her with roses,  
That she cannot see or smell?  
She is happy where she lies  
With the dust upon her eyes.

## Prayer to Persephone

**B**E to her, Persephone,  
All the things I might not be;  
Take her head upon your knee.  
She that was so proud and wild,  
Flippant, arrogant and free,  
She that had no need of me,  
Is a little lonely child  
Lost in Hell,—Persephone,  
Take her head upon your knee;  
Say to her, "My dear, my dear,  
It is not so dreadful here."

## Chorus

GIVE away her gowns,  
Give away her shoes;  
She has no more use  
For her fragrant gowns;  
Take them all down,  
Blue, green, blue,  
Lilac, pink, blue,  
From their padded hangers;  
She will dance no more  
In her narrow shoes;  
Sweep her narrow shoes  
From the closet floor.

## Elegy

LET them bury your big eyes  
In the secret earth securely,  
Your thin fingers, and your fair,  
Soft, indefinite-colored hair,—  
All of these in some way, surely,  
From the secret earth shall rise;  
Not for these I sit and stare,  
Broken and bereft completely;  
Your young flesh that sat so neatly  
On your little bones will sweetly  
Blossom in the air.

But your voice,—never the rushing  
Of a river underground,  
Not the rising of the wind  
In the trees before the rain,  
Not the woodcock's watery call,  
Not the note the white-throat utters,  
Not the feet of children pushing  
Yellow leaves along the gutters  
In the blue and bitter fall,  
Shall content my musing mind  
For the beauty of that sound  
That in no new way at all  
Ever will be heard again.

Sweetly through the sappy stalk  
Of the vigorous weed,  
Holding all it held before,  
Cherished by the faithful sun,

On and on eternally  
Shall your altered fluid run,  
Bud and bloom and go to seed;  
But your singing days are done:  
But the music of your talk  
Never shall the chemistry  
Of the secret earth restore.  
All your lovely words are spoken.  
Once the ivory box is broken,  
Beats the golden bird no more.



## Dirge

Boys and girls that held her dear,  
Do your weeping now;  
All you loved of her lies here.

Brought to earth the arrogant brow,  
And the withering tongue  
Chastened; do your weeping now.

Sing whatever songs are sung,  
Wind whatever wreath,  
For a playmate perished young,

For a spirit spent in death.  
Boys and girls that held her dear,  
All you loved of her lies here.



## Part Six







## Sonnets

### I

**M**INDFUL of you the sodden earth in spring,  
And all the flowers that in the springtime grow,  
And dusty roads, and thistles, and the slow  
Rising of the round moon, all throats that sing  
The summer through, and each departing wing,  
And all the nests that the bared branches show,  
And all winds that in any weather blow,  
And all the storms that the four seasons bring.

You go no more on your exultant feet  
Up paths that only mist and morning knew,  
Or watch the wind, or listen to the beat  
Of a bird's wings too high in air to view,—  
But you were something more than young and sweet  
And fair,—and the long year remembers you.

O H, THINK not I am faithful to a vow!  
 Faithless am I save to love's self alone.  
 Were you not lovely I would leave you now:  
 After the feet of beauty fly my own.  
 Were you not still my hunger's rarest food,  
 And water ever to my wildest thirst,  
 I would desert you—think not but I would!—  
 And seek another as I sought you first.

But you are mobile as the veering air,  
 And all your charms more changeful than the tide,  
 Wherefore to be inconstant is no care:  
 I have but to continue at your side.  
 So wanton, light and false, my love, are you,  
 I am most faithless when I most am true.

**A**ND you as well must die, belovèd dust,  
 And all your beauty stand you in no stead;  
 This flawless, vital hand, this perfect head,  
 This body of flame and steel, before the gust  
 Of Death, or under his autumnal frost,  
 Shall be as any leaf, be no less dead  
 Than the first leaf that fell,—this wonder fled.  
 Altered, estranged, disintegrated, lost.

Nor shall my love avail you in your hour.  
 In spite of all my love, you will arise  
 Upon that day and wander down the air  
 Obscurely as the unattended flower,  
 It mattering not how beautiful you were,  
 Or how belovèd above all else that dies.

**T**IME does not bring relief; you all have lied  
 Who told me time would ease me of my pain!  
 I miss him in the weeping of the rain;  
 I want him at the shrinking of the tide;  
 The old snows melt from every mountain-side,  
 And last year's leaves are smoke in every lane;  
 But last year's bitter loving must remain  
 Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide!

There are a hundred places where I fear  
 To go,—so with his memory they brim!  
 And entering with relief some quiet place  
 Where never fell his foot or shone his face  
 I say, "There is no memory of him here!"  
 And so stand stricken, so remembering him!



THIS door you might not open, and you did;  
 So enter now, and see for what slight thing  
 You are betrayed. . . . Here is no treasure hid,  
 No cauldron, no clear crystal mirroring  
 The sought-for truth, no heads of women slain  
 For greed like yours, no writhings of distress,  
 But only what you see. . . . Look yet again—  
 An empty room, cobwebbed and comfortless.

Yet this alone out of my life I kept  
 Unto myself, lest any know me quite;  
 And you did so profane me when you crept  
 Unto the threshold of this room to-night  
 That I must never more behold your face.  
 This now is yours. I seek another place.



VI

PITY me not because the light of day  
At close of day no longer walks the sky;  
Pity me not for beauties passed away  
From field and thicket as the year goes by;  
Pity me not the waning of the moon,  
Nor that the ebbing tide goes out to sea,  
Nor that a man's desire is hushed so soon,  
And you no longer look with love on me.

This have I known always: Love is no more  
Than the wide blossom which the wind assails,  
Than the great tide that treads the shifting shore,  
Strewing fresh wreckage gathered in the gales;  
Pity me that the heart is slow to learn  
What the swift mind beholds at every turn.

OH, OH, you will be sorry for that word!  
 Give back my book and take my kiss instead.  
 Was it my enemy or my friend I heard,  
 "What a big book for such a little head!"  
 Come, I will show you now my newest hat,  
 And you may watch me purse my mouth and  
     prink!  
 Oh, I shall love you still, and all of that.  
 I never again shall tell you what I think.

I shall be sweet and crafty, soft and sly;  
 You will not catch me reading any more:  
 I shall be called a wife to pattern by;  
 And some day when you knock and push the door,  
 Some sane day, not too bright and not too stormy,  
 I shall be gone, and you may whistle for me.

I KNOW I am but summer to your heart,  
And not the full four seasons of the year;  
And you must welcome from another part  
Such noble moods as are not mine, my dear,  
No gracious weight of golden fruits to sell  
Have I, not any wise and wintry thing;  
And I have loved you all too long and well  
To carry still the high sweet breast of Spring.  
Wherefore I say: O love, as summer goes,  
I must be gone, steal forth with silent drums,  
That you may hail anew the bird and rose  
When I come back to you, as summer comes.  
Else will you seek, at some not distant time,  
Even your summer in another clime.

I SHALL go back again to the bleak shore  
 And build a little shanty on the sand,  
 In such a way that the extremest band  
 Of brittle seaweed will escape my door  
 But by a yard or two; and nevermore  
 Shall I return to take you by the hand;  
 I shall be gone to what I understand,  
 And happier than I ever was before.

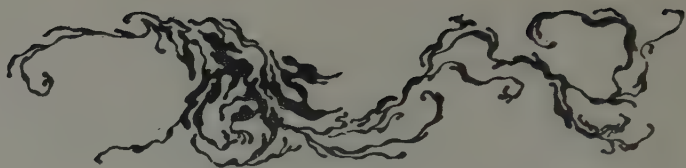
The love that stood a moment in your eyes,  
 The words that lay a moment on your tongue,  
 Are one with all that in a moment dies,  
 A little under-said and over-sung.  
 But I shall find the sullen rocks and skies  
 Unchanged from what they were when I was  
 young.

SAY what you will, and scratch my heart to find  
 The roots of last year's roses in my breast;  
 I am as surely riper in my mind  
 As if the fruit stood in the stalls confessed.  
 Laugh at the unshed leaf, say what you will,  
 Call me in all things what I was before,  
 A flutterer in the wind, a woman still;  
 I tell you I am what I was and more.

My branches weigh me down, frost cleans the air,  
 My sky is black with small birds bearing south;  
 Say what you will, confuse me with fine care,  
 Put by my word as but an April truth—  
 Autumn is no less on me than a rose  
 Hugs the brown bough and sighs before it goes.

YOUR face is like a chamber where a king  
 Dies of his wounds, untended and alone,  
 Stifling with courteous gesture the crude moan  
 That speaks too loud of mortal perishing,  
 Rising on elbow in the dark to sing  
 Some rhyme now out of season but well known  
 In days when banners in his face were blown  
 And every woman had a rose to fling.

I know that through your eyes which look on me  
 Who stand regarding you with pitiful breath,  
 You see beyond the moment's pause, you see  
 The sunny sky, the skimming bird beneath,  
 And, fronting on your windows hopelessly,  
 Black in the noon, the broad estates of Death.



XII

HERE is a wound that never will heal, I know,  
Being wrought not of a dearness and a death,  
But of a love turned ashes and the breath  
Gone out of beauty; never again will grow  
The grass on that scarred acre, though I sow  
Young seed there yearly and the sky bequeath  
Its friendly weathers down, far underneath  
Shall be such bitterness of an old woe.

That April should be shattered by a gust,  
That August should be levelled by a rain,  
I can endure, and that the lifted dust  
Of man should settle to the earth again;  
But that a dream can die, will be a thrust  
Between my ribs forever of hot pain.



**E**UCLID alone has looked on Beauty bare.  
 Let all who prate of Beauty hold their peace,  
 And lay them prone upon the earth and cease  
 To ponder on themselves, the while they stare  
 At nothing, intricately drawn nowhere  
 In shapes of shifting lineage; let geese  
 Gabble and hiss, but heroes seek release  
 From dusty bondage into luminous air.

O blinding hour, O holy, terrible day,  
 When first the shaft into his vision shone  
 Of light anatomized! Euclid alone  
 Has looked on Beauty bare. Fortunate they  
 Who, though once only and then but far away,  
 Have heard her massive sandal set on stone.









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